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FROM MY HUNTING DAY-BOOK

HERMANN
JUNKER.

FROM MY HUNTING DAY-BOOK

BY

HIS IMPERIAL AND ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE CROWN PRINCE OF THE GERMAN EMPIRE AND OF PRUSSIA

HODDER AND STOUGHTON

LONDON NEW YORK TORONTO

1912

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DEDICATED

IN GRATITUDE AND LOVE

TO

THE DUCHESS CARL THEODOR OF BAVARIA

Honoured is the huntsman's name,
For succouring his cherished game,
He honours God and hunts right true,
Who pays God's creatures their honour due.

INTRODUCTION

In submitting this book to the reading public I confess to a certain sense of embarrassment.

I should like from the first to warn my readers against harbouring any false illusions.

I do not pretend to claim any literary merit for these plain, unadorned little sketches. There is nothing particularly striking about them; they do not bring to light any sensational revelations.

They are just pages taken from the hunting diary of a man who loves open-air sport, and to whom Nature, grand and beautiful, is an inexhaustible source of delight and joy.

I have a great admiration for Ganghofer, Perfall, Schillings, and many others who have written so admirably of sport and life in the open, both as hunters and as men of letters.

But these pages ought not to be, and indeed must not be, compared with their works.

My hand is more used to, and more skilled in the use of, bridle, rifle and alpenstock than the pen, and only the consciousness that I have enjoyed many hunting experiences which fall but to the lot of few has induced me to offer this little book to sportsmen.

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CHAPTER I

AN ELEPHANT HUNT IN CEYLON

CHAPTER I

AN ELEPHANT HUNT IN CEYLON

IT had been raining heavily for several days. Our stopping place at Cantalei, a small native village, could not under such circumstances be described as a paradise.

Then one morning a native hunter arrived with the news that he had found fresh elephant tracks.

We started at once in a motor-car. The whole of Ceylon is intersected with a marvellous network of first-class motor roads. The only drawback is that these are, in places, very narrow.

Our ride was a short one. We soon left the car to follow the forest path to a point where the track led into the jungle. Anglo-Indians speak of any kind of thick wood as jungle. The name has nothing whatever to do with the kind of trees of which such a forest is

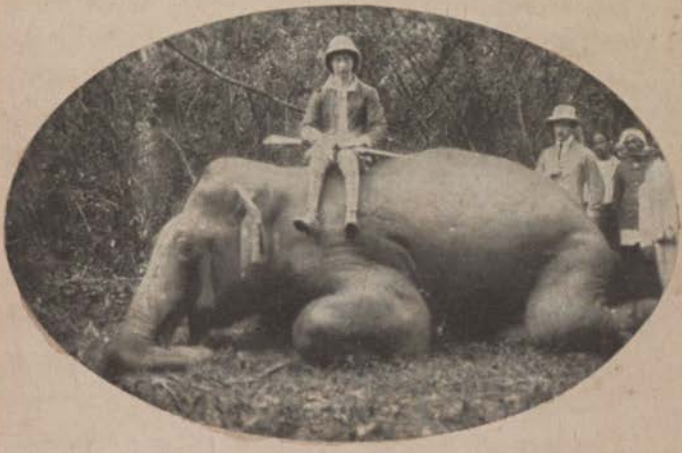
composed. In this case it was a thick undergrowth, a tangle of foliage, with only here and there a full-sized tree. There was all the more room for less pleasant creepers and thorny growths.

As a result of the heavy rains the ground was in a horribly sodden condition. We had to squelch along the whole time through extremely unpleasant boggy water, which came well over our ankles. Moreover, it was very hot, and the atmosphere was that of an orchid house. I felt all the time as if I were hunting in a Roman steam bath.

Cautiously we followed the wide track of the elephant, which, like some huge steam roller, had crushed down everything in its path.

We were a small party, four hunters in all. Two were Englishmen. One was the owner of the largest known elephant rifle. He had with him a gigantic double-barrelled gun. The other, an active little man, led and stalked in front of me. In the rear were my friend Finckenstein and the shikari.

For about three-quarters of an hour we



An Elephant Hunt in Ceylon

splashed about, perspiring at every pore, without seeing a single thing. Suddenly we heard a most peculiar noise. It sounded like distant thunder, dull and rumbling.

As we came nearer our guide whispered that it was the snoring of an elephant which, quite close to us, was enjoying his post-prandial sleep. He was right. After we had crept along for another three hundred yards—this creeping was, as a matter of fact, no easy matter, for the state of the ground was not far removed from that of the Pontine marshes, and we slipped about in a most miserable manner—we saw the colossal brute leaning on one side, grey and massive, with his head turned towards us, fast asleep.

The spot at which I ought to aim had been impressed upon me: if approaching from the side, at a triangle on the head between the eye and the ear; if from the front, immediately above the top of the trunk.

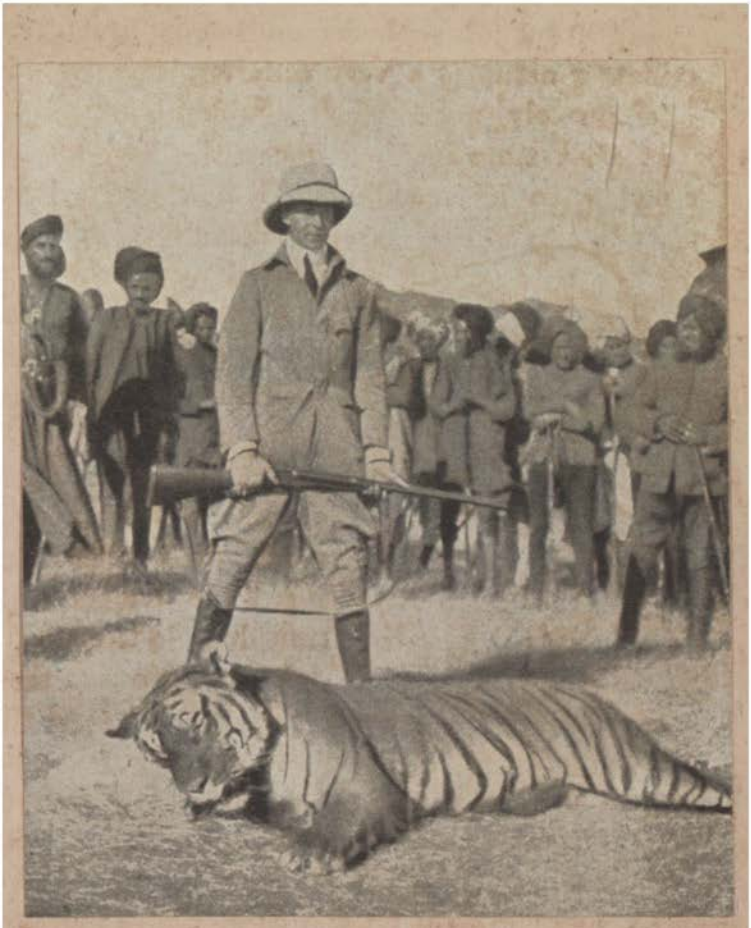
These theoretical instructions were all very well in their way, but when you are standing only some thirty paces—the distance was not greater

—in front of such an enormous brute, the matter assumes a very different aspect. Unfortunately, my English double-barrelled gu.. at that time inspired me with deep respect owing to its recoil, and I had given it to Finckenstein, while I carried my ·306.

I knelt down in the marsh and took hold of a small alder or something of that kind. I aimed at the point above the trunk and must admit that I fingered the trigger with considerable timidity.

What happened then I cannot possibly describe. The report of the shot was mixed up with a kind of earth- and sea-quake, and a fearsome trumpeting from the suddenly awakened old gentleman. He fairly sprang into the air.

I could see the place where I had hit him quite well—just a little too high.



My First Tiger

Owing to the fact that the head was turned to one side the shot missed the vital part.

The brute stood there amazed and furious. But only for a second, just long enough for Finckenstein and one of the Englishmen to fire. Then the wounded giant turned and crashed away. . . .

There we stood—looking remarkably foolish. The Englishman said "damn" and we said "verflucht,"—which is very much the same thing.

One thing I was determined upon, and that was to follow immediately.

One of the Englishmen roundly declared that he would not consent to my going a step farther, for a wounded elephant is no joke.

I told him quietly that he could go back if he liked. This he declined to do, so we all started to follow the horrible, reeking track.

That chase I shall never forget as long as I live.

The undergrowth was tremendously thick and prevented us seeing anything. Any moment we might have found ourselves within a few

yards of the wounded elephant. If he had attacked us we should certainly have been lost. There could be no doubt whatever about that.

The ground was slippery, covered everywhere with thorn bushes, so that we could not step a couple of paces aside from the elephant track. There were no large trees. All the time there was this hidden, threatening danger behind the wall of undergrowth. As a matter of fact, we were nearly caught.

One of the Englishmen had just pushed aside the curtain of climbing growth—when I suddenly noticed that he was making me violent signs. I jumped forward, and quickly motioned back to Finckenstein. . . . In front of us, twenty paces away, stood the grey giant, ready for the attack, his huge ears stretched out, his trunk rolled upwards.

In another moment he would have been on us.

As by agreement we opened fire, and bullets fairly hailed on him.

He turned and decamped.

I was in despair. We had had all the trouble, excitement and danger for nothing.

Once more we started in pursuit, and for another two hours fought our way, ever more painfully, through thicket and marsh, until finally our strength gave out. Utterly out of breath, we all sat down where we stood—that is to say, in the water. We were simply unable to move another step.

So ended this strange hunt. The elephant had received more than a dozen bullets—but we never saw him again.

On another day I shot a slightly smaller elephant, but in circumstances which were nothing like so exciting as those of the hunt I have just described.

If you have ever been in India, and have seen the clever, trained elephants, it would appear almost a crime to shoot such a splendid beast, which does so much honest and useful work. It is true that the old gentleman of whom I have been writing would never have done any good work, for a "rogue" elephant can never be caught and tamed. As long as

he lives he is the terror to the neighbourhood. There are natives, indeed, who assert that old "rogue" elephants do not mind occasionally killing and eating a man. That, I expect, is a Jungle Tale, for it is a well-known fact that the elephant feeds only on plants.

A Tigress with nearly full-grown Cubs shot in Mirzapur

CHAPTER II

A TIGER HUNT IN INDIA

Our Camp in Mirzapur

CHAPTER II

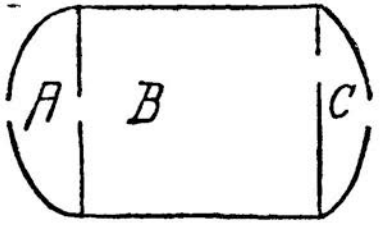
A TIGER HUNT IN INDIA

OUR hunting-camp was situated among most beautiful scenery.

The little encampment was pitched upon a grassy lawn shaded by magnificent old trees upon the banks of the Sone River. As one lives for half the year in tents in India these airy dwellings are amazingly comfortable. The so-called Cashmere tent consists of a charming anteroom furnished with comfortable reclining chairs and a table (A); a sleeping and living room (B) was conveniently arranged with a bed, writing-table, chairs, electric light, and so on; and a bathroom (C). The bath occupies a very important place in Indian life, and is usually taken very hot.

My host was Sir John Hewett, Governor of the Central Provinces, one of the most gifted, powerful and interesting personalities in the

Anglo-Indian Government. He was a delightfully jovial host and a grand organiser. There were also in our camp his Excellency Graf zu Dohna; my friend Finckenstein; Doctor Wiedenmann; Mr. Wyndham, the Deputy-Collector (something in the nature of our chief magistrate), who had made all the necessary



arrangements for the hunt with faultless precision; and the English doctor, Mr. O'Meara, a distant connection of the physician who attended Napoleon I at St. Helena.

We were a jolly, happy company. And the beautiful scenery with which we were surrounded was certainly not calculated to damp our spirits.

In the course of my hunting expeditions in the Fairyland of India, I have never been able

to decide whether the morning or the evening hours are the most lovely; on looking back, however, I think I would give the palm to the evening. And yet, when you crawl out of the tent in the early morning—somewhere about seven o'clock—and breathe the wonderful morning air; when you listen enraptured to the song of the birds and the happy cooing of a hundred doves among the branches overhead; when your dazzled eyes behold the river, a silver streak, shimmering by, then indeed, as we say—"who would not be a soldier!"

The first breakfast at nine left nothing to be desired; except perhaps on the score of richness. After breakfast we either read or wrote.

About ten o'clock I generally made my way to the tent of the Master of the Revels, Wyndham. Here it was as lively and animated as at headquarters before a battle. Mounted patrols on horseback or on camels arrived with tidings from the various places in which the decoy—generally a bull or a calf—had been tied. The tiger usually roams about at night and drags his prey into the thick jungle, where,

replete and idle, he lies until evening. This is the time to locate him. It was very amusing to see the various dispatches, such as: such and such a place " no kill " or " tiger killed." Many of these were written in Hindustani, and were, as far as I was concerned, an interesting riddle.

If a favourable report came we climbed nimbly at about eleven o'clock on to our hunting elephants, and the wonderful journey began. By this time it had become extremely hot, but, clad in a khaki shirt, sun-helmet and puttees, one was fairly proof against the sun's rays.

Riding on an elephant is not all bliss. Such a majestic gait, if kept up for long, is exceedingly trying to those unaccustomed to this form of exercise.

We usually reached our goal about three o'clock—a big stretch of cultivated land with fine old trees, and, in the background, pleasant little hills, thinly wooded. Here squatted the motley troupe of beaters, numbering about four hundred. They were quickly sorted, and the prearranged plan of campaign was communicated to the attentive listeners.

Our Hunting-Party in Mirzapur

Each of these brown fellows had a short hatchet in his hand. They all impressed me as being smart, quiet and intelligent. They were almost without exception Hindus.

We now went on foot towards the mountains. First through a bright streamlet, then up a fairly steep slope through dry underbrush and painful thorns. Soon we were bathed in perspiration, but the dry air prevented the ascent from being too unpleasant. Indeed, the climb was almost a pleasure, when one remembered Ceylon, where one seems to move about in a perpetual Turkish bath.

Our native huntsman, who crept up as noiselessly as a wily old fox, pointed suddenly to the ground with a brown finger and said : " Bagh," which means " Tiger."

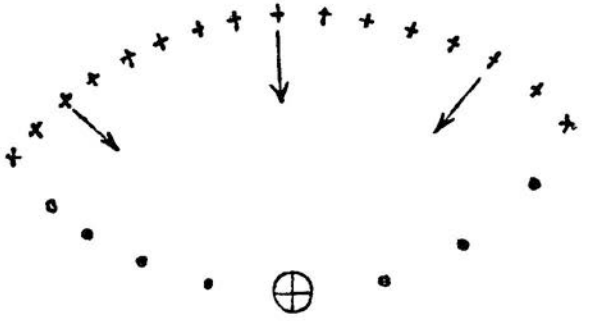
Then matters became serious.

After walking for about half an hour we reached the *machan* which had been provided for me. This was a kind of little platform erected in a small tree, carefully hidden in boughs and foliage.

I climbed up with my Hindu and settled

down. I had with me a heavy double-barrelled rifle (·450 cordite express by Holland), and gave the shikari the ·306.

There we had to wait and listen—a wearisome, tormenting time. One had to sit absolutely motionless upon a small, uncomfortable footstool. The Indian sun was pitiless; and



the white blinding light was only bearable through green glasses. But even this grateful protection had soon to be removed, as the big spectacles were a hindrance in shooting.

The beat I am describing lasted over two good hours—an almost unbearable period of glare and heat combined with intense strain upon every nerve.

It will be of interest, perhaps, to describe something of the technique of the hunt.

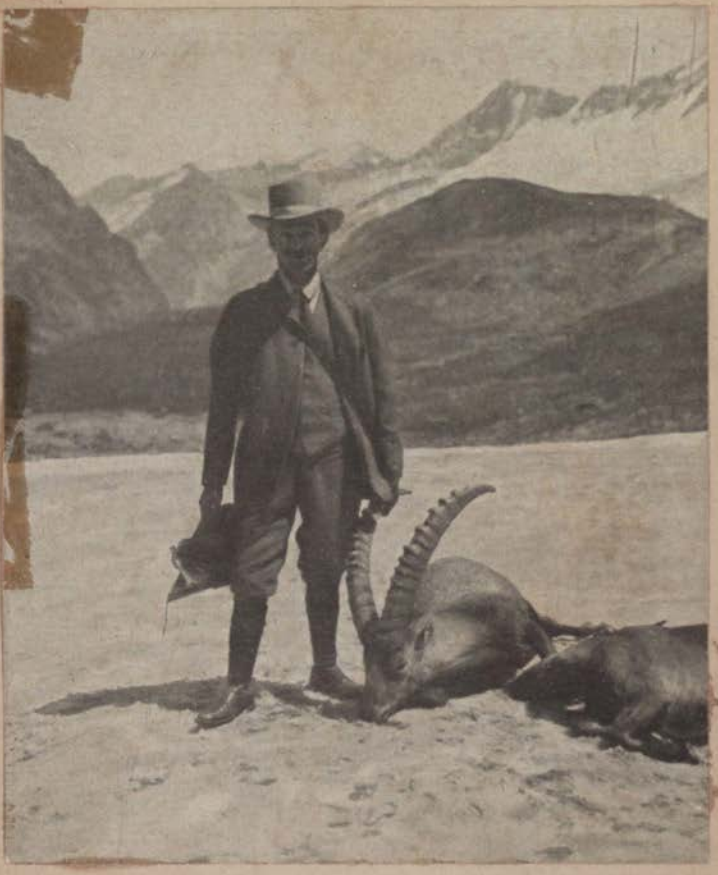
The cordon of beaters pressed forward, always in small groups of about ten men, for a tiger who has been driven from his lair might carry off a beater if he came upon him alone. The black dots in the diagram represent the outposts (" stops "), men placed in trees and armed with sticks. Theirs is the important task of preventing the tiger from slipping through the cordon. When an outpost spies an approaching tiger he taps gently upon the tree-trunk. The king of beasts then invariably turns in his tracks and retreats. The circle with the cross indicates the position of the guns.

A positively hellish noise ensues. Drums and rattles rend the air, shrill howls are heard, fireworks explode. Then, as if at a signal, the clamour subsides.

Then the performance is repeated. The sound comes nearer and nearer. Suddenly, on our platform, we hear one of the outposts tapping.

CHAPTER IV

SHOOTING ALPINE IBEX



The King of Italy at an Ibex (Steinbok) Hunt

quite unnerved. A good drink of whisky and water helped to restore me.

My shikari's joy was as great as mine. We very nearly embraced then and there on the platform, which was a bit too narrow for such rejoicings. Then my delighted Hindu yelled something in the vernacular into the jungle.

We climbed down and fairly jumped towards the tiger, who, even in death, presented a splendid spectacle of marvellous strength and untamable savagery.

Suddenly we were surrounded by a crowd of shouting, gesticulating beaters. I was not a little astonished to observe among them a number of urchins who could hardly have been more than six years old. The plucky little fellows had played their part, too, in that capital drive.

I shall never, as long as I live, forget that hot, Indian hunting day. Often now, when I take up my good double-barrelled rifle, I can picture the scene. Staring, white sunlight; hundreds of brown natives; a curious, sharp odour, such as is only to be found out there,

mixture of garlic, sandalwood and charcoal, and then that velvety, yellow coat of the king of the jungle. . . .

And afterwards the ride home through the silence of the evening. A delicious freshness is in the clear air. The sun sinks in a sea of violet and rosy clouds. And from innumerable huts rises the peaceful smoke of many an Indian supper.

Such a ride; such pictures; such emotions are not easily forgotten. They draw one back with a kind of homesickness.

The Englishman calls it "the Call of the East." I, too, know it now—that Call. . . .

My Friend Finckenstein and I with our Tigers

CHAPTER III

PIG-STICKING

CHAPTER III

PIG-STICKING

THE Englishman says: "Three p's make life worth living in India: pig-sticking, port and polo." And he places pig-sticking first on the list. I cannot entirely agree with him here, for, personally, polo appealed most strongly to me; but we won't quarrel over a question of taste.

"Pig-sticking" is not commonly looked upon so much from the point of view of hunting as from that of horsemanship.

We were living in the Government buildings at Jaipur. We were in the midst of delightfully friendly people, who took endless trouble to chase away those sad thoughts which inevitably beset every German who finds himself for the first time obliged to light the candles of his Christmas Tree far from his native hearth.

And the efforts of our hosts were indeed

crowned with success, for, on Christmas night I shot my first tiger. On other days pig-sticking, antelope-stalking and gay dances succeeded each other in splendid procession.

Now let me describe pig-sticking. When we rose in the early morning it was still distinctly cold. It required a certain amount of determination to leave one's warm bed and—after a short halt before the friendly grate—to go to one's bath in the adjoining room. After a most hearty breakfast, such as one only gets in England, we and one or two officers rode forth pig-sticking.

It was a perfectly beautiful morning. A clear, dry air, and yet so sharp that one's fingers tingled. And the sun was just rising! On a bright morning such as this, astride a good horse, one feels one could touch the tree-tops. The English have a very good name for the feeling; they call it "Fit."

The country was very flat, a kind of wilderness covered with tufts of very high reedy grass. The ground was of hard, dried-up loam in which were great clefts.

Sir John Hewett

We soon turned off the road. A native rode in advance carrying a long stick. He beat the reeds heavily, and at intervals gave a shrill cry. We had previously divided ourselves into groups of four, and the first group trotted some fifty yards apart over the plain. As soon as the Englishmen heard the shikari's cry they spurred their horses and dashed off with a loud cry of "Pig, Pig!" We did the same.

It was abominable country to ride over. One could see only a short distance ahead owing to the height of the reeds; the ground was very hard and uneven; and one would suddenly, without any warning, find oneself confronted with what they call a "nullah."

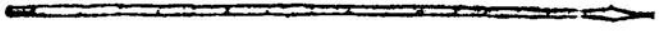
These wretched nullahs are channels washed out by the rain, sometimes only a few feet in depth, sometimes, however, with perpendicular walls three or four yards in height. In the latter case they are like deep gravel-pits. If you have the misfortune to ride full tilt at one of these you can imagine the cheerful things that happen.

After we had galloped for a time the pig was sighted. One of the Englishmen had already speared it. The beast "jinked" (doubled) and came in my direction. It made away as fast as it could straight in front of me. I dashed after it, but every time I sank my spear it jinked again, and my horse dashed by it. At last I succeeded in spearing it as I galloped past, but did not wound it mortally. It was the third hunter who gave it the *coup de grace.*

Meanwhile, my adjutant, Von Zobeltiz, had come a cropper but had escaped injury.

It is an exciting and dangerous sport. I can well believe that the list of broken arms and legs in India as a result of pig-sticking is a long one.

There are two ways of killing the beast. You either use, as we did, a long bamboo spear.



sticking him, as you ride, behind the shoulder-blade, or a short spear is used which is plunged perpendicularly from above. This last method

A Blackbuck Hunt at Jaipur

CHAPTER IV

SHOOTING ALPINE IBEX

ALL through my visit to India I had been longing to shoot wild goat in Cashmere. Unfortunately, the condition of the snow made an expedition at that time out of the question.

I was naturally overjoyed, then, when the King of Italy invited me to stalk Alpine Ibex in the Italian Highlands.

In the middle of August my aide-de-camp and sporting comrade, Lieutenant von Zobeltiz, and I started from Breslau for Italy. We had chosen the hottest day of a hot summer. The journey from Breslau to Milan reminded us uncommonly of the Passage of the Red Sea. From Milan we took a branch line to Aosta. There we were greeted by one of his Majesty the King's adjutants.

We motored from Aosta to Castle Sarr beautifully situated in the Aosta valley. Her we breakfasted.

After motoring in the broiling sun for half a hour, we reached the little village where mules were awaiting us, and we began our climb to the hunting-lodge.

Four and a half hours the ride lasted altogether. Half-way we could see traces of an ibex drive, during which the King had shot twenty-two ibex. I was fortunate enough, by running up a slope, to shoot two with the King's own weapon.

The whole neighbourhood had gathered together for the drive. The mountaineers, in their gay attire, made a very pretty picture. With the King, we made our way to the hunting-lodge of Valsavaranci. Situated at an altitude of about 6000 feet, the hunting-lodge is a very simple, one-storey building with tiny rooms, which remind one of barracks, and a small eating-room. Close to the house are the mules' stables. The whole establishment, including the camp for the drivers and

Tiger Shot in Mirzapur

servants, is sunk in a hollow and is thus sheltered from the wind.

Up here the cool freshness of the air was a pleasant relief after the stifling journey. Indeed, the little rooms were distinctly cold at night.

Next morning, about seven o'clock, we started on mules for the ibex hunt.

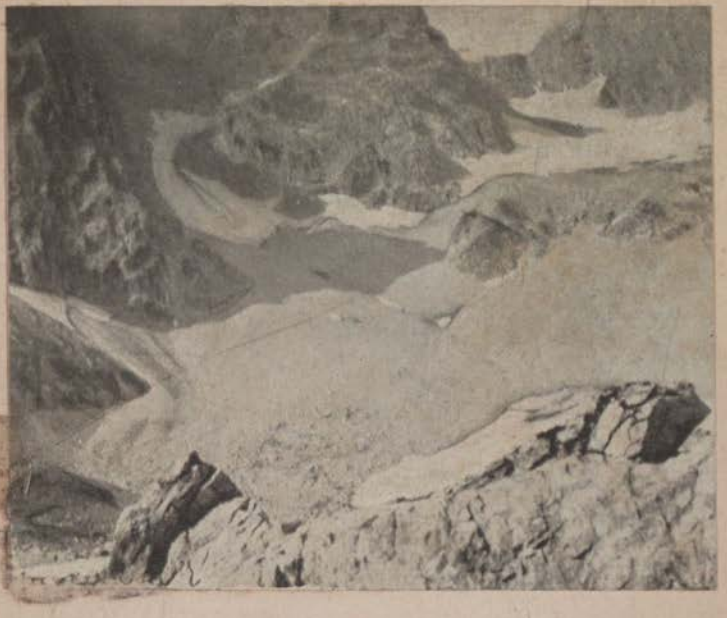
The country is remarkably wild and picturesque and full of variety. Far away we caught a glimpse of Mont Blanc's white snow-peak. The road was barren and stony, and, except for edelweiss and a few alpine plants, there was no sign of vegetation. How even the frugal ibex manage to exist here is a mystery to me.

The King possesses three large ibex preserves, and each is shot over only once in every three years. The total stock is about 4000. It has been carefully and cleverly nursed back to this number after a period during which it had declined to a few head. The prime necessity for the preservation of this game is absolute solitude and quiet. The King told me he had on several occasions sent

presents of young ibex to the Emperor Franz Joseph in order to introduce this game among his mountains, especially in the neighbourhood of Salzburg, but that these attempts proved unsuccessful. Evidently there are special factors, such as climate and the quality of the soil, which are necessary to the existence of the alpine ibex.

The company of beaters, some hundred and fifty to two hundred men, is usually sent out on the previous evening, spending the night in primitive fashion in the mountains, so as to be ready at daybreak for the dangerous and heavy climb upwards. These sinewy, brown fellows, with their open, sincere countenances, hardened by the sharp struggle for existence in an unfruitful land, were particularly attractive to me, as, indeed, are all mountaineers. And this sympathy soon changed to whole-hearted admiration, as I watched these honest folk at their work of driving.

I, myself, have seen these plucky fellows on almost perpendicular slopes, on which even chamois would falter, moving and turning with



Ibex (Steinbok) Hunting Country

astonishing lightness, courage and skill. Their performance almost passes belief.

They disdain a rope; as one of them said to me when I spoke to him about it: "Our women would laugh at us. And, after all, if one of us is killed it is better he should die alone than drag his comrades to destruction!"

The King told me that he had often reproached himself after a bad accident had occurred, but that the people themselves were so passionately fond of the sport, on account of the variety it introduced into their dull lives, as well as the wages—about ten marks a day—that to put a stop to these dangerous hunts would only cause intense dissatisfaction among the mountaineers.

But there can be no doubt as to the peril they entail for these people. Apart from the rugged steepness of the country, the dangerous, crumbling rock of this neighbourhood, it also happens not infrequently that the ibex, driven into a corner, enraged by the shots, turns at bay at a spot where there is no escape, and hurls the driver into the void.

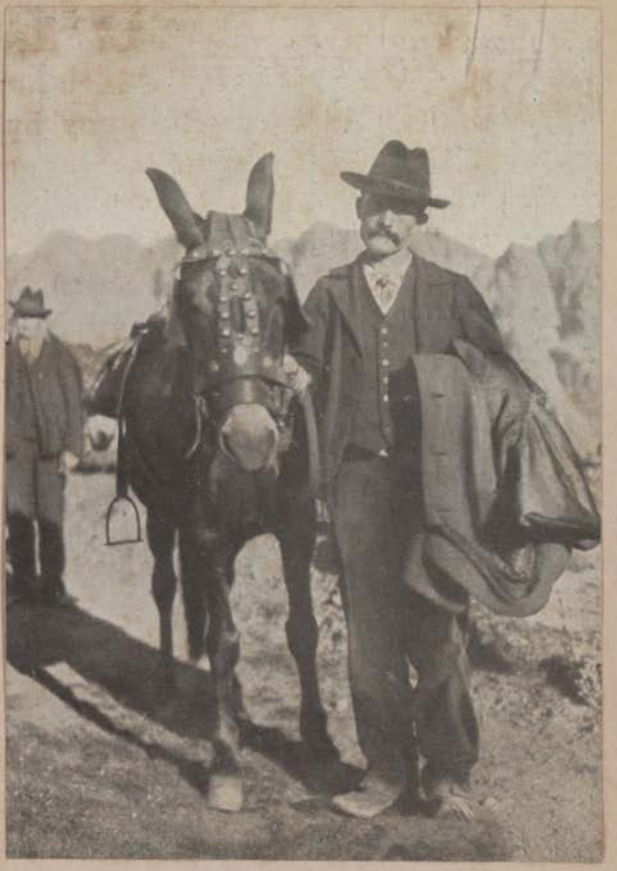
We took up our stand at the mouth of a wide rocky ravine about 9000 feet above sea-level. Little ramparts had been formed of rough stones, thrown together anyhow.

His Majesty and I were together in one butt.

The drive began about ten o'clock. It was a long time before anything showed itself. Then it was a roe which came fleeing in great airy bounds along the ridge and down into our hollow. The first ibex was shot by the King; the next two fell to me.

According to my experience, a driven ibex is harder to shoot than a chamois. While the chamois stops every now and then to look round him, giving one a fairly good chance for a shot, the ibex as a rule never halts, and a good shot at flying game is certainly not every one's luck. The King was an unusually fine shot, especially at long range.

Driving never has the same charm for me as stalking, but on this particular occasion everything was so especially attractive that it may almost be taken as the exception which proves the rule.



My Mule

The stern grandeur of the wild, magnificent Alpine country; the daring drivers; the remarkable game, which seemed to belong to another age; the clear air and the golden sunrays which streamed into our hollow, all combined to delight the sporting and artistic instincts of any one fortunate enough to take part in such a sport. And they are not many. The number of sportsmen in Europe who have spanned the horns of an ibex is very small.

In the next three days we added fifteen to twenty wild ibex to our bag, then we had to part regretfully from our Royal host and the gorgeous mountain scenery. One souvenir, besides my fine trophies, I took home with me in the shape of the uncommonly good, sturdy mule which had carried me to the hunt. The faithful animal has done me good service since when I have been shooting chamois in the Bregenzerwald.

CHAPTER V

A FOURTEEN-POINTER

A Grand Fourteen-Pointer

CHAPTER V

A FOURTEEN-POINTER

ONE fine day, just after the close of the manœuvres, I found an invitation on my writing-table to a stag-hunt at Johannisberg. His Eminence, the Prince-Bishop Kopp, was the sender of this welcome invitation.

It was not quite easy to come to a decision, as I had planned to make the life of the king of the German woods a burden to him during the rutting season, both in east Prussia and in the beautiful red deer hunting districts of Pomerania. At last I made up my mind to follow these hunts with a visit to the friendly Prince in Austrian Silesia.

On a sunny, cool spring morning we alighted from the train at Jauernick and were greeted on the platform by his Eminence in person.

Then we drove with the Head Forester to the hunting country.

The landscape was familiar and homelike, pleasant hilly country which stretched, gradually rising, to the foot of the Sudeten. These are very reminiscent of the dark Hartz Mountains.

Our way ran through a narrow, fairly steep valley, wooded with beautiful fir-trees. Where the sun's rays did not reach, it was cold, bitterly cold!

After a very enjoyable ride we reached our destination.

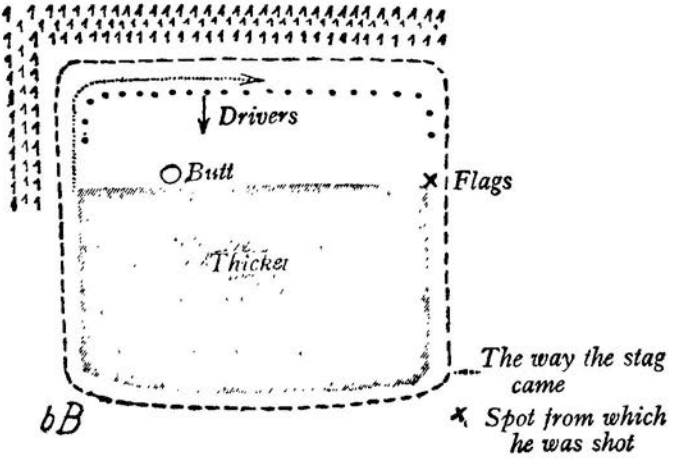
The rut was unfortunately at an end, so they had enclosed a big thicket, in which, the huntsman declared, were two fine stags.

The Head Forester, a very merry and capable huntsman, was certainly a prey to misgivings as to whether it would be possible to drive a stag out of this great, dense fir thicket.

We climbed into a butt, erected at the outskirts of the thicket on the edge of a large piece of clearing. This clearing was a slope,

The Shooting-box, Klein-Ellgut. Photographed by the Crown Princess

surrounded on two sides by high trees, on the other sides by the thicket.



A glorious landscape unfolded itself from our butt. The sun had broken through the mist, and the whole country seemed bathed in violet and brown. And the wonderful, fresh mountain air was like champagne.

The Head Forester sounded the advance. Silently the beaters crept into the thicket.

First a fine buck appeared, than a red brocket dashed out and away down the hill-

side. The suspense had lasted an hour when we heard a cry. This was a sign that the drivers had reached the flags at B. Things did not look very hopeful.

The beat now pressed noisily back. The cries of the drivers came nearer and nearer. The suspense grew. Nothing happened.

At last men began to come singly out of the fir thicket. It was all over.

The whole thing had lasted two hours, and so far the only result of the chase was a beautiful view.

Much annoyed, we climbed out of the butt and began to mount the edge of the thicket to get to the carriage.

Close to the lower edge of the clearing I heard the cry of the drivers. I turned, to see a very large stag trotting peacefully along past the flags and stopping at the entrance. He was at a distance of some two hundred yards.

There was no time to lose. What a piece of luck that the long-distance rifle was still loaded!

The first shot took him in the bowels. The

second shot, after I had steadied myself against my huntsman, went home. The stag fell.

We rushed up to him, and found he was a perfectly splendid fourteen-pointer. The antlers weighed eighteen pounds.

I have seldom been so delighted over a stag as I was over this one in the Cardinal's forest. He was brought in triumph to the Prince's Castle at Johannisberg. And the joy of his Eminence was, I really believe, almost as great as mine.

As we came that evening through the Friedrichstrasse Railway Station at Berlin with our splendid trophy, we heard loud cries of astonishment and admiration. No hunter could hear these without satisfaction. For, if he is honest he will admit that his trophies give him a double pleasure when they evoke admiration—and sometimes a little envy too —from others.

CHAPTER VI

MY FIRST CAPERCAILZIE

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MY FIRST CAPERCAILZIE

DEEP among the dark fir-trees of the splendid Black Forest lies an ideal hunting lodge known as Kaltebronnen.

There we drove one fine spring day, my uncle Max von Baden and I. Everything was already blossoming and sprouting in the plain. Laughing meadows, patterned all over with purple violets and white snowdrops, green bushes everywhere. But the farther we journeyed towards the mountains the poorer and more barren grew the country, with the exception of the beautiful fir-trees which give the Black Forest its name.

By the time we reached the lodge it was winter again and we were in deep snow. The little house is built entirely of wood; deliciously comfortable with its little sitting-room looking out on to the wonderful dark mountain forest;

surely a most perfect spot for the cure of nerves shattered by the stress of modern life. Luckily we were neither of us in need of such a cure.

Next morning early, indeed very early, we started. The huntsman stomped ahead with the lantern, and we crawled up the mountain for over an hour. Arrived at the pairing place, we took up our position under two tall pines and waited. A few hen-birds were to be heard in the neighbourhood, but not the sound of a cock anywhere.

At last, far, far away, we heard the familiar tack-tack—tack-tack—tack-tack-a-tack—tack-tack.

Then we started again. At first it was by a kind of game track, not very easy, but still a path of sorts. Then straight into the snow through the high woods.

After a journey which seemed pretty long to me we reached a little clearing. The cock was nearer, but so far we had seen nothing of him.

Here the snow, which looked so beautiful, became uncommonly trying. It reached to our

Valsavaranci

hips, and we jumped about in a sort of clumsy waltz.

Suddenly the huntsman pointed silently with outstretched arm to something dark. A black lump, it looked to me, performing a remarkable dance on the snow.

It was the cock!

Carefully and in silence we crept forward, working our way painfully through the heavy snow. Then after two or three deep breaths, we took aim, the shots rang out, and the mad dancer, the gay troubadour sank lifeless in the snow.

Even in death he casts a proud glance on the glory of his gay plumage, framed in the purple drops of blood, scattered upon the glittering surface of the snow. The proud fellow has died well, passing straight in the full tide of his love to the eternal hunting-grounds.

It was my first capercailzie, and a very fine bird. His crop was full of pebbles, ground smooth. These remains of a most remarkable meal I have had set in the cover of a cigarette-case as a souvenir.

Meanwhile the sun had risen. And with it began my birthday, for it was the sixth of May. In great spirits we returned to the hunting-lodge, where uncle and nephew broached a bottle of champagne in memory of a splendid bird.

CHAPTER VII

STALKING ROE-BUCK IN SILESIA

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STALKING ROE-BUCK IN SILESIA

IN the neighbourhood of the idyllic Silesian village of Klein-Ellgut, surrounded by pine woods, on the edge of a wide stretch of pasture and arable land, stands, unadorned, planned in true peasant style, our favourite hunting-lodge. I built it years ago when I was a bachelor, hoping, even then, that some day I might bring my wife here.

On the ground floor is a hall, which is both living- and eating-room; further on a study, a bedroom and a dressing-room; in the upper storey is another room for the lady-in-waiting and two guest chambers, with some servants' rooms. Everything is very simple but most comfortable, and a deep, settled peace steals over your spirit in the evening as you sink into the great wicker chair by the fire, and watch the cigarette smoke

curl up towards the rough-hewn rafters, and indulge your thoughts. And these thoughts always return to the same point: what a joy this forest solitude is compared to the restless grind and nerve-racking strain of the city.

Every year, if it is in any way possible, Cécile and I come with a trusty friend to this Buen Retiro; and it is always a wrench when we have to leave it.

From this hunting-box we hunt the roe-buck. The grounds of the estate of Öls extend to about 50,000 acres. About sixty bucks a year could be shot in these preserves; we reckon, as a rule, a total of from twenty-five to thirty bucks. I am very particular that only fine old bucks or those in bad condition who would not breed well are shot.

At three o'clock in the morning there is a loud rapping on my door; it is time to get up but—if I did not stand so much in awe of my capable little Head Forester von Stünzner—I should turn over and prefer to go to sleep again. With a great heave I am out of bed and in a cold bath, and then I go down to

breakfast in the hall, where I find friend Finckenstein, nicknamed "The Black," already in possession. Then we drive separately to the hunting-ground.

The little Head Forester drives with me. And though we are neither of us quite awake we soon get into conversation. We know every tree and shrub of the country. The Head Forester has many questions to answer, and tells me all the news. What has become of the only buck which escaped us last year; whether the famous Pit-Farm buck is still there; whether there has been any poaching; whether my friends the gipsies have come yet (I have a great weakness for these amusing vagabonds); how the various cattle are doing; how much damage has been done in the forest—all these and more must be talked over.

We drive through tall, beautiful pines, then through lovely meadows and rich, cultivated land. Close to a big corn-field we halt. Here we hope to see a buck come out into the clover on the other side.

We crawl carefully along the edge of the rye. There they are, three roes standing in the clover. It is still very dark, so we wait. At last I think I may venture. A glance through the glasses shows me a very fine buck with two does. They are about two hundred paces away.

The little Head Forester crawls in front of me, and I take aim with the barrel of my long-distance S. rifle on his shoulder. With him this is possible, whereas when in Ceylon I tried the same thing with a native the wretch swerved sideways and the shot went wide.

The sights show clearly on the red body of the buck and the shot rings out. The buck gives a high bound and disappears in the corn. I have aimed too far behind him, and sure enough, when we reach the spot, we see the marks of his take-off and of the hasty flight through the dew-wet corn, but no blood. I have missed.

For a long time I stand there wondering, not at all pleased with myself, how it can have happened. Then my eye falls on the gun and

A Fine Buck, Shot at Klein-Ellgut

the mystery is solved. The sights have shifted and stand at three hundred.

My good friend Stünzner consoles me. He has sent a forester to watch a little preserve, where a fine but shy buck is known to be in hiding; so we may be successful yet. We start off and soon meet the hunter, who has before now located many a fine buck for me, standing in a meadow, his glass levelled at a patch of rye. Sure enough the buck has come down from the preserve and has doubled and lain down in a very narrow rye-field.

Now good advice was at a premium. What should we do? The buck might well stay there six hours and then steal clear away—a rotten business that! We decided to go for it.

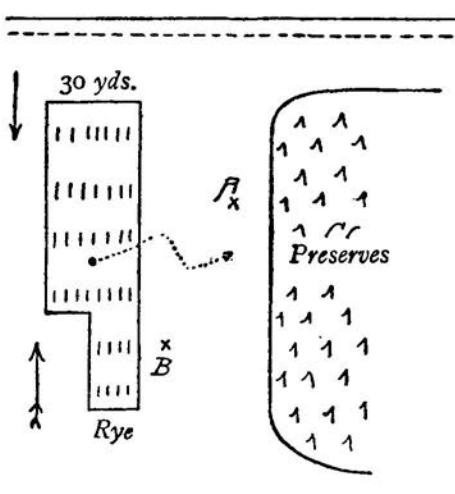
The Head Forester took the right wing; I the middle and Warnert the left. A in my sketch represents a peasant's cart and B our carriage. With a halloo we left the carriage and ran right through the rye.

Nothing happens. The huntsman scratches his head and swears, but insists: "The buck

must be there! I must have seen him if he had doubled!"

So back we go!

Suddenly in the middle of the patch something rises almost between my legs and makes



for the preserve, and I see it is a buck—a very fine one. Under ordinary circumstances a running buck is no easy shot, and now I was hampered by the fact that I might have either the forester or a cart within range. I decided to risk the farm cart and let fly. Missed! I

tried again. Again it got away. I got the third shot in with the buck between the two carts. As if struck by lightning, he collapsed.

My Remington repeater had made this possible; otherwise three shots in such quick succession had been impossible. It was the best buck I ever shot. And a very narrow thing too.

Cécile often accompanies me on my hunting expeditions. She shares my passion for nature and sport, and her sharp eyes are as quick as the foresters'.

The ride home is delicious. The sun has risen, the birds are in full song; everything smells of fresh earth, of wet meadows and corn. And in the corn glisten bright-coloured tufts of wild flowers. The peasants, many an old friend of mine among them, are driving their teams to work. And hark! there is the cuckoo's tireless call!

On a stalk like this we have sometimes seen as many as thirty bucks, all possible shots. But it's quality, not quantity that counts.

Not far from Ellgut stands our beautiful,

great castle of Öls. Here a merry band of my young friends and comrades gather for the four days' hare and pheasant shooting. Cécile and I, however, care more for the quiet little house in the forest, and only inhabit the castle for the winter hunting season.

The Head Forester's House

CHAPTER VIII

GROUSE SHOOTING IN SCOTLAND

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GROUSE SHOOTING IN SCOTLAND

AT a certain time of year in every fashionable restaurant "grouse" is set before the guests at dinner. The bird looks very like a badly cooked duck and tastes as though it had been shot too late. Few Germans realize what it is they are eating for Fashion's sake.

It seems to me it is more satisfactory to shoot this game than to eat it. I have shot it in Scotland. That is some years ago now. I was staying then with one of the big "landlords" for a grouse drive.

These English country houses are, to my taste, the most elegant and at the same time the most comfortable places imaginable. In my Indian sketches I have already paid tribute to the wonderful hospitality of the Briton, and I should like to mention it gratefully again now.

Each guest is delightfully cared for in a house of this kind. And this care is so quietly and charmingly exercised that the recipient is never allowed to realize that the host is putting himself to any trouble on his behalf. The English excel in this art of genial and thoughtful entertaining.

At home we are apt to think a guest must be everlastingly amused—he is worn to death with the occupations, pleasures, " sight-seeing " provided by his host—amusements which usually afford entertainment to every one except the poor victim. There is nothing of this kind in England. The meals are at settled hours, and at these the " house-party " foregathers. Unless there is somet. al on foot, such as a shoot, each one is absolutely his own master in the intervals. As these " house-parties " are usually composed of light-hearted young men and very often of beautiful women, there is every reason why you should have a delightful time. The whole house and home of the host is in the fullest sense of the word at the guest's absolute dis-

In the Head Forester's Garden

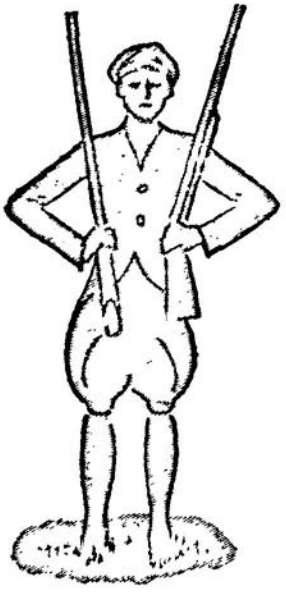
posal. He only has to say the word, and he can ride, motor, fish, shoot, sail, play tennis or golf, flirt—everything is at his hand. He has only got to choose.

The Scottish castle in which I found myself was typical of this perfect hospitality. Each guest received a gardenia every evening to wear as a buttonhole with his dress clothes. In the morning the party started forth by coach and four, while I followed with my kindly host in a little American buggy. This he drove at full gallop to the rendezvous, as anything else bored him. The springs of the little carriage were so constructed that I was not shaken in the least. These drives I found both novel and delightful, for at home one only sees runaway cabs and mounted batteries in full gallop.

We were a very happy party, some ten gentlemen and eight ladies, all most suitably but smartly dressed, and behind them, following their masters, the loaders, typical, clean-shaven, emotionless Englishmen, each carrying a pair of guns, without straps (guns with

straps are "very bad style"), across his shoulders.

The surrounding country consists of an undulating moor, wonderfully lovely when the heather is in bloom. The heather serves as food for grouse and ptarmigan. The butts are made of low walls of turf behind which one hides from the birds. Beginning a long distance away, the beaters drive them with long sticks to which small flags are attached, towards the guns.



Grouse fly very low but exceedingly fast; it has been calculated that they can attain a pace of over thirty-five miles an hour. They are scarcely within view when they have passed. In their manner of flying they strongly resemble driven partridge, and no doubt many of my readers know how difficult these are to

hit! My first grouse drive, therefore, entailed a large expenditure of ammunition, but unfortunately a small bag. Next day things went better. I had the good fortune to shoot five grouse and a black-cock.

A jolly lunch brought the shoot to an end. In the evening the household band played delightful waltzes, to which one could either dance or flirt, as one pleased.

Those were truly happy days in old Scotland.

CHAPTER IX

TWO CHAMOIS HUNTS

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TWO CHAMOIS HUNTS

I

EVERYTHING was deep under snow in the high Alps.

It is seven o'clock in the morning, when our little company begins to get under way from the hunting-lodge, Hopfreben, in the Forest of Bregenz.

First goes my trusty head huntsman, Brügger. He is a typical mountaineer, thin and wiry, with sinews like ropes, and big, bright eyes. We have already shot many a chamois, and been through much together, and that affords the truest sense of comradeship. Among the snowy mountains we are no longer master and dependent, but just two chamois hunters who love their mountains and the chase. He and my other huntsmen come from the Zillertal; and every one of

them might stand, just as he is, as the hero of one of Ganghofer's stories.

I ride my trusty mule, whose acquaintance we have already made when ibex hunting in Italy, and whom I have to thank for easing and shortening many a weary mile. Behind comes a native of the Bregenzer forests, Mucksel by name, a butcher by trade; formerly a famous poacher, and the best climber of the whole district. If ever he says, "Can't get over here," one may be dead certain that it is impossible. Many a time he has held the rope when I have had bad places to climb. Last comes the muleteer, who has also seen better days, but whose possessions, by a cruel fate, were burnt to the ground in a single night. Even this has not robbed him of his sense of humour.

The temperature is hardly adapted for riding. It is a relief when the actual ascent begins. But the joy is short-lived.

For now we have to tackle the Uenchen.

When my huntsman came to me the night before with the suggestion that we should

Red Deer Shot at Mützelburg

hunt there, I listened with mixed feelings. The Uenchen rises immediately behind our hunting-lodge, and is a mountain for which I have no friendly feelings. It has a roof-shaped summit, and descends in the direction of Hopfreben in slippery, precipitous grass slopes. In summer it is horrible enough, and in winter it is not rendered more attractive by steep snow-slopes and avalanches. The other side falls almost perpendicularly into a rocky valley.

Seen from above it looks something like this—

Now the ascent begins. The path leaves the easy road below and runs up the difficult mountain side. First goes Brügger, then Mucksel, then myself.

The snow reaches to our hips, and makes most painfully wearisome going. It is impossible to see where one is stepping, and often a fallen branch or the hidden bed of a stream leads to a heavy fall.

In a few minutes we are stripped to the shirt. In spite of this the perspiration pours off us. A fine bit of "training" this!

Every now and then we pause for a short breather. And so we go on for nearly two hours.

At last we get out of wood and reach the bare slopes, for which I have no love. We make for a lonely, weather-beaten fir which stands defiantly on the remains of an avalanche. Here we halt for breakfast.

All at once we hear the well-known call of a chamois. . . .

There they are, coming straight towards us over the snow plateau.

First the doe and behind her the buck. At this time of year the latter looks in the distance almost like a bear. His beard waves and flutters to and fro in the breeze on the saddle.

I hastily seize the glass to get a view of his horns. I can see them clearly. He is a fine animal.

The doe must have noticed my movement, for she starts, stops dead, glances quickly towards us and whistles.

Brügger is against my shooting. He says they are too far away.

I, however, am afraid the buck may make off. Very carefully I slip behind the great roots of the fir and rest my gun on the knapsack which we have opened. I sight the chamois anxiously through the glass, but, in my anxiety, it has become clouded by my breath.

I have to lay down the gun and get out my handkerchief to wipe the glass. A terrible moment, this, one eye squinting towards the buck all the time.

At last I am ready to take aim, then a slight touch and the rest is in the hands of fate.

On all fours the buck springs into the air; then stands still; then he goes backwards a few steps and then slides and slides farther

and more rapidly, at last in great bounds, into a cloud of snow, to the valley below. . . .

"Good Lord! his horns—if only he hasn't smashed his horns!" cries the hunter.

There he lies in a little dent on the old avalanche some four hundred yards below us. You can just see one horn through the glass. There is nothing for it but to go down.

So away we go on the difficult descent.

The other two have roped me, and we start carefully down the mountain. When we have reached the edge of the old avalanche, on the same level as the buck, but still some two hundred paces away from him, Brügger begins to look anxious.

"Bad going, there," he says.

I laugh at him and tell him that of course we can manage it. We go carefully a step at a time. The huntsman cuts steps, for the snow is frozen hard here and goes in one long precipice down into the wood. A single slip and there is no chance of saving yourself.

Every now and then I look back at Mucksel. He walks silently, holding the rope in an iron

Our Car and Improvised Garage

grasp. All at once, with overwhelming suddenness, I hear a rushing, grumbling sound. My huntsman leaps back like lightning, and before my feet, not more than four yards away from where I stand, the whole mass of snow glides into the valley below; a great white expanse, the size of the floor of a big room. It must have been an old hollow, frozen avalanche. It seemed perfectly safe, and yet in a moment the whole thing slid almost from under us. The grey grass of the slope lay bare before us.

Death, the great white death, had passed within a few yards of us and had greeted us in passing.

I think each of us breathed a short but sincere prayer. . . .

Thoughtfully, and as carefully as if we were treading on eggs, we turned and crept back the same rough path we had climbed down.

Only after a long detour which took some hours did Mucksel bring the buck to the hunting-lodge. We soon regained our spirits with the help of a bumper of port.

Since those days we have often spoken of that adventure. "Well, now," I say, "what about that old grey-beard on the Uenchen?" And the sturdy mountaineer scratches his chin and answers: "The devil! that was touch and go!"

II

It is summer time, and nowhere in the world is summer so glorious, so rich in beauty as in the high Alps. Early in the morning when it begins to get light, out one sallies with gun and knapsack to stalk the buck to his lair. The air is wonderfully clear and rarefied, and scented by a thousand flowers and aromatic herbs. All the mountain peaks are bathed in wonderful golden sunlight. Far below, the valleys are still wrapped in twilight shadow. The mist lies in thick clouds upon the meadows, and the smoke rises in straight slender columns from the chimneys of the huts.

These summer mornings in the Alps cer-

tainly preach an impressive sermon—and the text is the joy of living. And always I send up a prayer of thanks to my Creator, in that He has permitted me to see and realise all this beauty. How many thousand unfortunate fellow-creatures are condemned to pass their lives hemmed in by the bricks and mortar of towns and factories! If only one could convey the freshness of such an early morning in the mountains into their hard-working lives, how they would benefit in mind and body!

We are together once again—Brügger, the driver Mucksel, the mule, his guide and myself. A very good buck has been reported in the Schadonapass, and we are on our way there now.

First we follow a rushing mountain torrent. Beside these tumbling waters stand many "Martel" crosses to remind the passer-by to say a prayer for poor souls who have met their death in the mountains.

By a little wooden bridge we cross to the other bank. My mule usually objects to this passage; he has a holy terror of the water, and

has a rooted objection to facing any danger connected with the hated element.

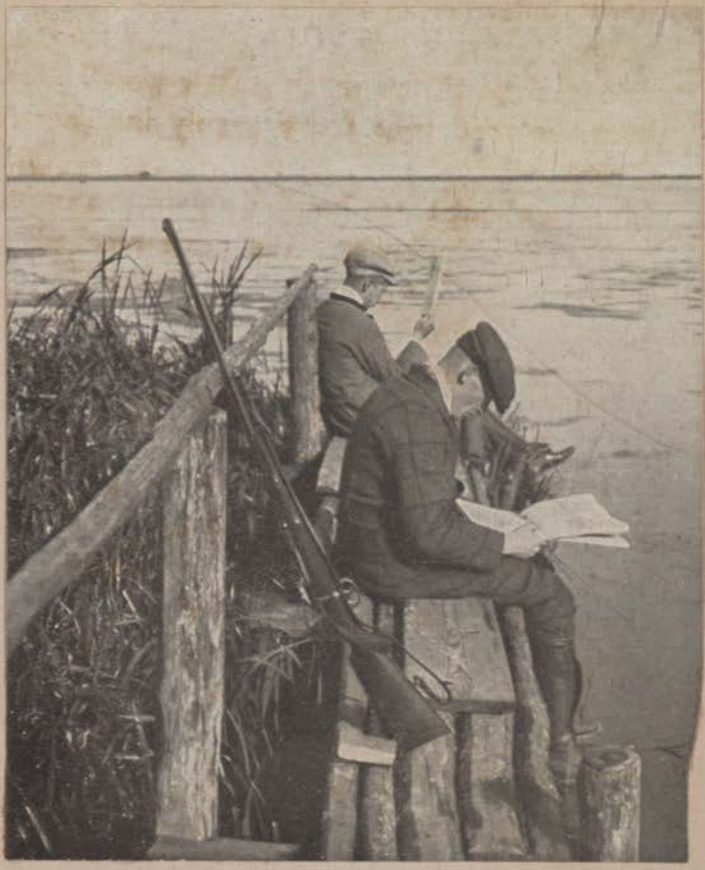
Now begins a vilely stiff climb up the stone-strewn slope till we reach a little wood. From here the road runs fairly evenly into another valley.

After about three hours we gain the summit of the Schadonapass. We have reached our goal.

On the summit a huge crucifix stretches its arms to the heavens. The hunters, who are credulous folk, have a legend that on Good Friday the Saviour has been seen to descend from it and walk among the peaks.

The view from here is lovely and impressive. Around us nothing but barren rocks. Only the lower slopes have any vegetation; young trees and cranberries, for which the chamois hunter is decidedly grateful. Often he has them to thank, not only for a fine buck—but for life itself! They are strong, firmly-rooted bushes which one can safely clutch, and by which one can draw oneself up again.

We lay down to "speculate," as the hunters



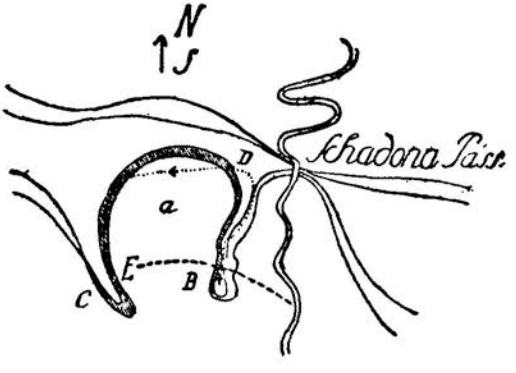
The Author and Lieutenant von Gossler reading after a Day's Sport

say; that is, to sweep the country with the glass in search of game. We soon found an old buck standing on an eminence. But how were we to reach him ?

Brügger was of the opinion we had better make a bee-line for him. This sounded very simple and pleasing, but it seemed to me a bit risky, for there was a bit of a wind and the ground was in a rotten condition for climbing. However, we started off. Goodness knows, it was a wretched climb; thick bushes and Alpine roses blocked our way, and the ascent was very steep into the bargain. It was weary work.

When we had got so far that I began to think that in two or three minutes I might safely fire, there was a double call and stones came clattering down. The explanation was simple enough : the old gentleman had noticed something and was off. I was not only out of breath but out of temper. The whole drudgery for nothing, and not another buck anywhere in the neighbourhood. But Brügger consoled me by declaring that he knew where the buck had disappeared to.

We climbed over the ridge and clambered down the other side towards the ravine (a). This was by no means easy going and called for a steady head. Mucksel had kept a sharp eye upon us, and, at sign from Brügger, had



followed the buck up the eastern slope. We had hardly reached the bottom of the ravine when the buck, which had been fleeing before Mucksel, appeared over the crest at D, and made, in great leaps and bounds, for the valley. Though I was about four hundred yards away, I decided to try a shot. The

dust raised by the bullet proved that it was no good at such a distance.

It was a beautiful sight to watch the buck working round the almost perpendicular wall, which stretched in an easy curve to C, not unlike the circle of a bicycle track. He was coming near to my position, E, again. I lay on the ground behind a huge rock and followed every movement of the animal with my rifle. The sun, which we had greeted with such pleasure, was now very trying, for it shone upon my glass and interfered greatly with my aim.

At a range of three hundred yards I fired again. Again without any luck. He made for a spot in the wall (near C), thinking to get clear away over the edge. It was too annoying to see the bullet hit the rock close to him.

Now he reaches the crest, gathers himself together for a spring, and is half over. He makes a splendid target; the sights show against his shoulder blade, I let fly and see him kick out behind, and then, turning, leap

back again a little lower down only to disappear behind a mass of rock.

Now things became really exciting. That he was hit was certain, but to reach him obviously impossible. What was the next thing to do?

Here the *deus ex machina*, in the shape of honest Mucksel, appeared. He undertook the difficult task, and, taking our rope, started on his way. His wiry form soon disappeared behind the crest of the mountain, C, his idea being to approach the ridge from the south-west and from there to attempt the climb up the rock. Meanwhile we breakfasted, our guns lying in readiness across our knees.

Half-an-hour must have passed when the silhouette of the driver appeared against the clear sky. Heavens, how quick the man had been! It seemed hardly possible. Through the glass we could see him uncoiling his rope.

Brügger said: "*Sakament*, he is a clever devil, is Mucksel! He's pluck enough for anything!"

All honour to his pluck—but this time it was in vain. He did not let himself down by the rope, but made a kind of lassoo with it, what our sailors call a " running eye " and we call a noose. In our innocence we imagine that the buck must be dead. We can see clearly how the huntsman pulls; we see the rope grow taut, and now, sure enough, appears the head of the buck. The noose is round his horns. But this pleasant mode of conveyance does not last long. Suddenly the animal begins to swing backwards and forwards. Then it strikes out lustily with its hoofs. Mucksel begins to curse. And before I can realize what is happening there goes my buck in full flight along the rocky wall.

It was not only high time but the highest time to shoot, so sighting at 250 I sent an S. bullet after him. He springs high into the air and pitches forwards. Quicker and quicker he rolls towards the valley, until he lies motionless far below. We hurry along, wondering anxiously whether he has injured his horns in his death fall. At last we reach him and

find him to be a splendid buck. The first bullet hit him too far back.

This was one of the most remarkable chamois hunts in the whole of my experience as a sportsman.

CHAPTER X

THE PHANTOM STAG

Our Shooting-box at Hopfreben in the Forest of Bregenz

CHAPTER X

THE PHANTOM STAG

A CERTAIN amount of superstition is bred in the bone of almost every good sportsman. And every true huntsman loves occasionally to tell the story of some weird and incomprehensible experience. Even if I have never met the "Wild Huntsman" in the woods or the "Flying Dutchman" on the sea, I, too, have my amazing hunting story. It's a story about a stag.

In the middle of the lovely Mützelburg forest, an ideal spot for red deer, lies hidden a track of grass land which turns and twists in happy abandon towards the wood. I know every branch and tree in this neighbourhood. Many a fine stag has breathed his last on these beautiful meadows.

The remarkable thing is that every year, on the very last day of the rutting season,

and on that day alone, a splendid fourteen-pointer appears in a certain corner of this green expanse. Three times I have fired at this fellow and missed him, and each time he vanished as though the earth had swallowed him up.

The first time I made the acquaintance of this uncanny animal we drove quite close to a whole herd. About thirty yards away, standing in the bracken at the edge of the big meadow, was this grand stag. One could see every branch on his antlers with the naked eye. Down I sprang from the cart and fired point-blank.

My aim was all right, the herd scattered, and the stag—simply disappeared! We could neither see nor find any trace of him.

Next year when stalking with Lieutenant Gossler I caught sight of the same stag lying in the corner of a meadow. We crept within range. I adjusted the sights with the utmost care. I fired, and missed again. The stag vanished, leaving, as on the first occasion, no trace.

One evening in the third year Gossler arrived breathless at the spot where we had arranged to meet, with the news that he had just seen our friend again in the meadow.

We hurried to the spot. Sure enough the stag stands roaring and pawing the ground in a little clump of alders at the edge of the meadow.

No chance of getting nearer. The wind is in the wrong direction and it is already beginning to grow dark.

At last the herd began to move in search of fresh pastures. I stalked them, always hugging the wood. At three hundred yards I try a shot.

The result does the famous rogue credit, for it is just the same as usual. In long strides, his magnificent antlers laid far back, he dashes into the forest and is seen no more.

And this year! One evening my wife, the Head Forester, Gossler and I were driving more or less aimlessly in the forest. We passed for the third or fourth time the corner of a meadow on which a herd with a few small

deer was grazing. We hardly took any notice of them. Then I caught sight of something suspicious moving in the thin wood behind the herd.

I leaped out of the carriage and looked through the glass! I undoubtedly recognized the splendid stag, the famous fourteen-pointer! The herd began to move and made off through an alder wood to an adjoining meadow. The stag moved in their midst.

The forester and I stalked them as quickly as possible; but they had already gone some distance. At last, in a small field, we saw the herd again. With infinite care we crept towards them and managed to get within possible range. The deer, however, were restless and moved to and fro uneasily round the border of the wood.

There is scarcely light enough to shoot.

In spite of that, after a most careful scrutiny through the glass, I take particular care, adjust the sights, and fire. There is just enough light for me to see that the stag takes a great leap, then drops dead.

A View from the House on the Mohnen-Fluh

The Head Forester and I excitedly shake hands; at last we have got the blessed brute!

After a quick run over the three hundred yards of marshy meadowland we reach the spot, and there—to our indescribable surprise and disillusionment—lies a poor wretched twelve-pointer, killed by a beautifully clean shot. This was really going beyond a joke! I told the forester to his face that there was something wrong here. At this he found his tongue again, and told me that for a long time there had been a legend among the neighbouring huntsmen of a splendid stag, at which many of them had shot, that was bewitched, and for which the fatal bullet had not yet been cast.

Well, I am not really superstitious, but I must say I am inclined to think there was certainly something mightily uncanny about this stag.

We still call him the ghost-stag, and I do not believe I shall ever get another shot at him.

CHAPTER XI

BLACKBUCK HUNTING

Our Huntsman Rupprecht searching for a Fine Buck

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BLACKBUCK HUNTING

THE blackbuck is common enough in some parts of India. It is as abundant there as the roe-deer is with us.

They are most graceful animals, with glistening black coats, which, however, are quite white on the belly. Their horns are like corkscrews. The animals are usually found in herds of from ten to twenty. Very fine old bucks sometimes go singly.

We hunted them in the neighbourhood of Jaipur and Hyderabad. Round Jaipur stretches a broad, undulating plain covered with dry grass and thorn bushes. It is the pig-sticking country.

We motored along a good road out of the raspberry-coloured city, and very soon reached our goal. Here we mounted a native ox-cart in which two fleet little zebus, bullocks, were

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harnessed. These zebus are very carefully bred and go at a remarkably good trot.

The primitive two-wheeled cart rattled away over the stones, through deep sand and over treacherous rocks.

Very soon we spied a little flock of blackbuck on some rising ground. We looked through the glasses and discovered that unfortunately there was not a good head among them. So on we drove.

At intervals I get down and walk, for the rattling and unexpected bumps of the springless cart make every bone ache. It gives one some idea of the agonies our unfortunate wounded countrymen in South-West Africa must have endured in the ox transports. Think of them! often in the broiling sun with no water to drink.

At last the native huntsman spies a good buck. The wagon goes on and I take aim, lying on the ground. The buck receives the charge point blank. The distance was very short and it was an easy shot. When we measured the horns, however, they came near

to beating the record for that part of the country.

In this fashion we shot another pair of fine blackbuck and then walked homewards. I could easily have shot forty in one day in Hyderabad. The beasts were carefully looked after there, and were very tame and easy to approach.

The Indian princes have another form of blackbuck hunting. To my taste it is unsportsmanlike, even barbarous.

A species of panther called a cheetah is captured when young and carefully tamed. They are splendid animals, slender as thoroughbreds, strong-boned, with very keen eyes. They are driven in ox-carts to the neighbourhood of the blackbuck and are let loose upon them from a distance of about two hundred yards.

The first part of the drama passes so quickly that it is difficult to follow the course of events. I have had the matter carefully explained to me, however, by some English hunters. The cheetah spies the blackbuck. With a bound

like lightning he flashes over the ground and falls upon his prey. One blow of the paw and the quarry is brought down. The cheetah seizes him by the throat. Then he drains the blood and does not leave his victim until he is glutted.

As I said, I took a dislike to this grisly performance and did not care to repeat it. It is only fair to say that the fleet, graceful movements of the attacking cheetah are well worth seeing from an artistic point of view.

Their task accomplished, the cheetahs are driven home in triumph, each curtained in his own cart. He can only be employed in this way once in the day.

In some parts of India blackbuck are hunted on horseback with spears. I can well imagine that this is first-rate sport.

CHAPTER XII

A DRIVE AT MIRZAPUR

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A DRIVE AT MIRZAPUR

IN the hope of giving the reader some idea of the extraordinary variety of the game in India let me try and describe a drive in Mirzapur.

Though the country in which we had been tiger-hunting was not by any means rich in game according to Indian ideas, Mr. Wyndham made up his mind to arrange a drive in the jungle for us.

The jungle which was to be driven consisted of low undergrowth, thorn bushes and a few big trees.

As soon as the guns were in position the drive began. I stood in a little clearing surrounded by dense thorn bush about a hundred paces distant. Before long a sambur broke through the thicket followed by a fine stag. I shot the stag running, and he fell and

lay motionless about ten paces behind where I stood. I doubted whether I had killed him and wished to shoot again, but was prevented by my native, who was afraid it would disturb the drive.

Before long a large boar appeared. This also received a bullet and fell dead. When I turned to look for my stag, I found he had vanished, and a long and troublesome search was undertaken in vain. The S. bullet must have gone right through him and have simply stunned the brute. In any case a good head was lost.

A hyena came loping along before me and I shot it as it passed.

In the second drive a cheetal, a small deer not unlike a roe-deer with poor horns, appeared. Unfortunately I missed. Then came a doe nilgai, a very fine animal. I hit it and my neighbour gave it the *coup de grâce*. Then two fine bears followed, which I missed as it was very difficult to get a good view of the ground. Then, in swift succession, I shot a magnificent peacock and a jungle-cock.

Chamois Ground in Winter (Hopfreben)

After the drive the drivers told me they had come upon a sleeping boar in a thicket. We went there and, on stones being thrown at the bushes, instead of a boar two young panthers emerged which I shot and killed.

Then we breakfasted in a beautiful spot surrounded by lovely old trees. Round us camped the drivers—a picturesque spectacle.

After breakfast we betook ourselves to the last drive on a mountain slope dotted with fairly big trees. The ground here was clearer. At the beginning of this drive I hit nothing. The others, too, had little luck. Just at the end, however, a fine bear appeared, coming across the slope towards me. I shot him at about thirty paces and he rolled over like a hare, and then recovered and went on his way. A second bullet had to be sent after him before he rolled over for good. He was a black bear with a coquettish white collar. The great pelt looks very well stuffed, and stands upon the stairs in my Dantzig home.

During this drive we saw an otter with seven young ones. They made an extra-

ordinary picture, and as they came towards me I could not for the moment imagine what they were. Unfortunately, there was not time to shoot. The young ones, hardly as big as a young wild boar, were not worth shooting. It is not often, I imagine, that one sees an otter during a drive.

On this day I had within range panther, nilgai, bear, hyena, jackal, sambur, cheetal, peacock, jungle-cock and an otter. Certainly a motley and fine collection! And, as I have said, the jungle we drove was not considered good from an Indian point of view.

A hunt of this kind with the Maharajah of Kuch Behar, one of the greatest and most powerful of the Indian princes, would have showed a still greater variety. In such a drive there would no doubt have been rhinoceros and tiger, perhaps even a fine bison. Anyhow, such a hunt could not have been carried on from butts level with the ground. The guns would be either on elephants or on the high platforms, called *machans*.

At the end of our day's work we mounted our elephants and rode back to camp, well pleased with our day's sport.

This is perhaps a good opportunity to say a word about these elephants. The elephant must certainly be the most intelligent animal in creation. He lives to a great age and knows his keeper so well that the latter can hold intelligent conversations with him. As you listen you feel that the animal understands every word. The keeper calls out something to the giant, and the elephant obeys him at once to the letter. For instance, a sportsman may have dropped something upon the ground. The mahout (the driver) shouts some, to us, unintelligible word, and the animal, without the quiver of an eyelash, picks up the article with his trunk and hands it politely to his driver.

If the path is bad in a thick jungle, the elephant sets to work and systematically makes another. He pulls small trees up by the roots, bends others out of the way, and in a short time the path is clear. As a rule the elephant

knows no fear even before the tiger. It sometimes occurs, during a drive, that a tiger or panther will spring upon the old fellow, but the fun is not all on their side, for they are soon shaken off and the great feet of the colossus trample them to powder. It is no wonder that in India the elephant is looked upon with almost superstitious reverence.

The ease with which elephants carry heavy trees, and the way in which they manage them with their trunks is staggering. They ford rushing rivers; they swim magnificently; slowly but very surely they climb soft, slippery river banks, up which a man can hardly clamber. They fear but one thing, and that is quicksand. The banks of the Indian rivers are often bordered by moving sand-dunes. These may be very dangerous for the elephant. For if the heavy giant ventures his weight on these sands, he is hopelessly lost. The clever fellow knows this well, and it is a difficult matter to get him to go anywhere in the neighbourhood of these dangerous spots. In his fear of sinking he tears everything

Home from the Hunt

from his back, the howdah in which one sits, and the men who may be riding him, and then throws them under his feet that he may get a foothold to work upon.

In Rudyard Kipling's books there are some charming stories of elephants, which on account of their fine observation are of the deepest interest to every animal lover.

Every Indian prince possesses a large number of elephants. On gala occasions the animals are wonderfully painted and caparisoned. Their tusks are gilded; their heads and backs are adorned with every sort of decoration.

Riding on an elephant is rather poor fun for a European. But you begin to understand it when you are in the country, for the elephant is an essential part of India as the changing of the guard is in Berlin; beer in Munich; coffee in Saxony, and ice-water and chewing-gum in America.

CHAPTER XIII

A HUNTING EXPEDITION IN THE GANGES DELTA

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AT the end of the incomparably beautiful journey through India we found ourselves in Calcutta, where we were welcomed in the most cordial manner in the friendly home of the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, and his wife. Here, unfortunately, we received the order to "reverse arms," that is to say, we heard from Berlin that the rest of our tour must be given up, and that owing to the plague in Eastern Asia our return journey must be made via Egypt.

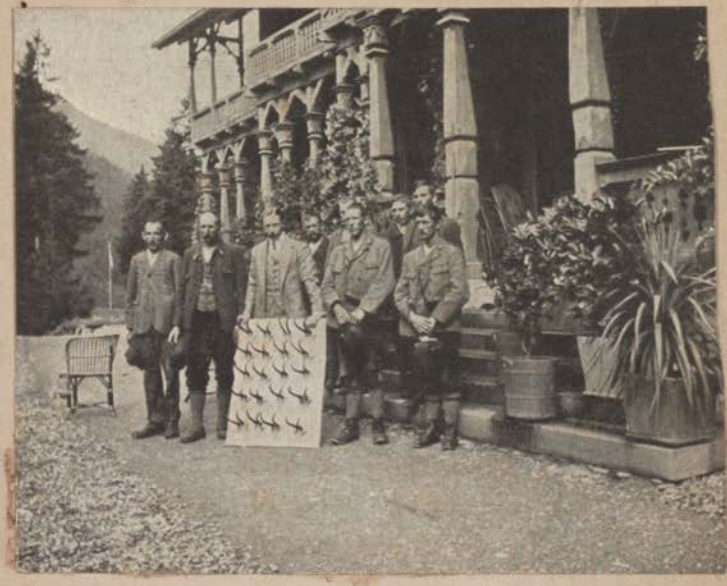
We had still a day or two before the steamer sailed, and the Indian Government most kindly did all in its power to make it possible for us to make a short expedition in the province of Sunderbund, that is to say,

among the islands lying in the delta of the Ganges.

One thing I was particularly anxious to do, and that was to add one good buffalo to my very miscellaneous bag. Our party included Graf Dohna, Graf Finckenstein, Lieutenant von Zobeltiz and Professor Widenmann. Besides these, among other English gentlemen, was Sir Harold Stuart, who acted as my kind mentor throughout our whole trip.

After a night journey in the train from Calcutta we arrived at a small place on the banks of one of the arms of the Ganges, where the yacht of the Governor of East Bengal awaited us.

This yacht was a really weird construction. It consisted of two parts, a vessel containing the engines and another boat coupled on to this containing the living-rooms, among them a large saloon. The yacht was built in the reign of Queen Victoria, and was upholstered according to the taste of that period. It



My Huntsmen and Beaters

was most comfortable, and possessed this great advantage that one could travel about, anchoring wherever one felt inclined, quite independently of other means of locomotion of the delta.

After a pleasant voyage lasting some twenty-four hours, we reached our hunting-ground. It was a most picturesque spot. Many branches of the sacred river Ganges wind through pleasant wooded country. In some parts the country reminds one — of course only as a whole, and taking into account the different nature of the vegetation — of our Spreewald at home. In these parts there are a large number of tigers. They are not easy to shoot, however, as the inhabitants of the delta are anything but enthusiastic drivers.

We thought it wise to bring several Gurkha policemen with us for this very purpose. The Gurkhas hail from Nepal on the North-East Frontier of India, and in type they resemble the inhabitants of Eastern Asia. They might

almost be mistaken for Japanese, and are the best soldiers the English possess in India. They are small but extraordinarily wiry and tough little people, who fear neither hell nor the devil.

We managed to bag a tiger and several large crocodiles on our way to the spot where we hoped to find buffaloes. This was a lonely island lying in the Gulf of Bengal. It is called Kukri-Mukri, and, until now, had seldom been visited by Europeans. A large herd of buffaloes was known to exist here.

The island is covered with splendid woods, but on the coast there is a large expanse of barren land.

We landed in small boats.

While we were still disembarking we observed several buffaloes grazing not far from the sea. We stalked them round the edge of the wood, until we got within range. Finckenstein and I chose two of the finest and opened fire.

Each of us hit our buffalo with the first shot, but it took many more shots to bring them down. An English gentleman who was with us told us that he had seen sportsmen chased by buffaloes who had already received from ten to twenty bullets. It is a well-known fact that a wounded buffalo is the most dangerous animal in the world. He does not flee; on the contrary he makes a wide circle to get ahead of the stalker, ready to fall upon him when he least expects it. Oberleutnant Graz has an exciting tale to tell about such a wounded brute. On one occasion, in Africa, he barely escaped with his life.

Soon after we opened fire a bull separated himself from the herd and came straight upon us. We each hurriedly selected a stout tree and took cover behind the trunk. As the brute came nearer, Graf Dohna succeeded in wounding him. At this the buffalo lowered his head and charged into the outskirt of the wood, crashing in between us and Graf Dohna, but without doing any

damage. We found his body later in the thicket.

We again skirted the wood and made our way back to the coast, and were rowed in boats near the spot where the wounded buffaloes lay weltering. We got within easy range and gave them the *coup de grâce* from the boats. They turned out to be two fine specimens.

Unfortunately, there was not time for a longer stay in this interesting neighbourhood, otherwise we should certainly have added a tiger or two to our bag.

The Sunderbunds, as this group of islands is called, are seldom visited by Europeans, as the climate is very bad, and malaria is prevalent.

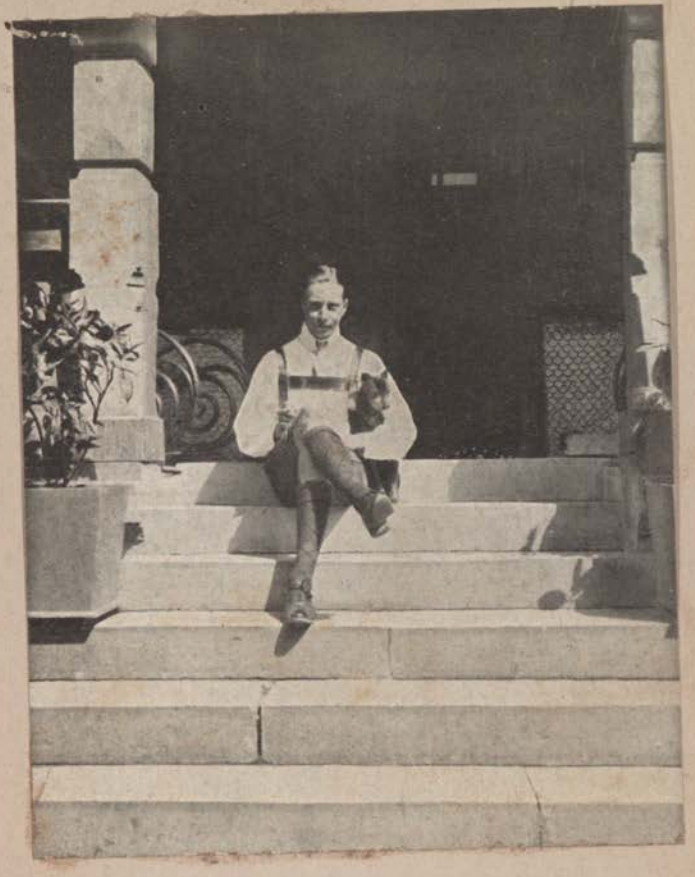
On the return voyage we came upon a charming picture. Thousands and tens of thousands of water-fowl clustered on the sand-banks, and in amazement watched our boat glide past.

This was my last hunt in India. From the

Sunderbunds we went straight back to Calcutta, and there we had perforce to part from this many-hued wonderland and bid farewell to the host of those we were glad to call friends.

CHAPTER XIV

CONCLUSION



At Kopfreben

CHAPTER XIV

CONCLUSION

IN bright array a series of hunting pictures of all kinds and conditions of sport, far away in the east and in our beloved Germany, has passed before our eyes. I have tried to bring, too, my own sensations and feelings before my readers.

We sporting men pity, from the bottom of our hearts, those to whom the pleasures of the sport—no matter in what form—are forbidden or unknown. And when I write of "sport," I mean especially the sport of "stalking." For it seems to me that when you consider the whole range of hunting—that wonderful combination of battle delight in Nature and contemplation—stalking is the truest sport of all. The shooting of driven game is merely a question of marksmanship,

and is after all more in the nature of a shooting exercise than sport.

The dangers of a hand-to-hand fight with the wild beast that our forebears knew and practised is, alas! owing to ever-increasing civilisation, almost a thing of the past. Nowadays the born sportsman must find his compensation in the physical exertion of stalking; the endurance of the hardships of inclement elements; the matching of his wits with the hunted, and at the end of all in the knowledge that a good shot has found its billet.

But it is surely not this fighting spirit alone —if we can still call it by this name—which draws us sportsmen into the open wild. The great book of Nature opens itself willingly and without your asking before the eyes of a true hunter. In the glowing sunrise; in the silence of the mid-day hour, when tired Nature sleeps; in the soft dusk of the evening, spreading its peace over wood and dale; in the wild, shrieking mountain gales; in all these great glories Nature speaks to us lonely hunters in ever-

varying, ever-mighty voice, singing to us the high song of the Creator of all things.

It is always difficult to speak of one's religious feelings and convictions. One thing I know: I, to whom my great ancestor's words, "In my realm each man is free to find his salvation in his own way" are as from my own soul, have never been in closer communion with my God than when, my gun across my knees, I sat in the golden glory of a lonely mountain dawn or experienced the wonderful, moving peace of the forest at eventide.

The sense of one's own insignificance and nothingness as compared to the eternal boundless grandeur of Nature in the sight of the marvellous works of our Creator—by whatever name He is called—the moments of leisure when one has opportunity to dream and to reflect dreams, in alternative with honest exertion and strain of both mind and body experienced in outwitting the wild; these are sensations with which no one is so familiar as the true sportsman.

When the born sportsman goes forth to the

chase, he will experience all these things if only he can lie watching his quarry without stirring a finger; if he can refrain from shooting any but the finest beasts, and if each particular kill is less an experience in itself than a link in a long chain of delightful experiences.

These hours spent in solitary communion with Nature are alone enough to make life worth living. Nothing can equal the peace and beauty of some of the evenings I have spent stalking game. How often I have thought, then, of the inscription the Mogul emperors placed over their citadel at Agra: "If there is a paradise upon earth, it is here, it is here!"

And then, nothing knits friends so closely together as the sporting experiences they have enjoyed together. When, in the evening hour, the fire burns brightly on the hearth, and the happy sportsmen, stretched so comfortably in the great leather arm-chairs, a cigarette between their lips, their eyes fixed upon the trophies on the wall, begin to fight their battles over again. "Do you remember when we were

stalking that stag?" You feel at once a spirit of comradeship and something that I can only describe as an intense inner happiness.

May the true sportsman increase and multiply and the unworthy become less and less. This in closing is my sincere wish. For even though the good sportsman kills the animal he hunts, he still remains, throughout his subtle struggle with his quarry, the grateful friend of Nature. And on every hunting expedition he feels in tune with the wonderful harmony of Goethe's exquisite lines—

"Yet in each soul is born the pleasure
Of yearning onward, upward and away,
When over our heads, lost in the vaulted azure,
The lark sends down his flickering lay,—
When o'er crags and piny highlands
The poising eagle slowly soars,
And over plains and lakes and islands
The crane sails by to other shores."

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